

The Builder.

No. CLVL

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31, 1846.



ULHAM, called in ancient writings Fulanham and Foulham, has been distinguished as the residence of the Bishops of London from the 7th century. Faulkner,

in his "Historical Account of Fulham," which contains all the information on the subject that can be found, says the earliest mention of the place occurs in a grant of the manor to Bishop Erkenwald, in 691.

The rectory is in the patronage of the Bishop of London, and is now held by the Rev. R. G. Baker, who succeeded the Rev. William Wood, the last in the list of rectors given by Faulkner. The first rector recorded by Newcourt, John de Sancto Claro, was presented to it between 1304 and 1313; Henry Martin was vicar in 1339.

The parish church, dedicated to All Saints, is an ancient structure, and stands near the bank of the Thames, at the foot of Putney Bridge. Notwithstanding its early connection with the Bishop's Palace, and consequent notoriety, nothing is known of its foundation. "We were in hopes," says Bowack, in his "Antiquities of Middlesex," written in 1705, "what- ever imperfect accounts have been left of the foundation of other churches, that here we should not have wanted light, since it is situated so near the Bishop of London's seat, which appears to be much ancienter; but after the most inquisitive search, we could discover nothing at all;" nor have succeeding inquirers been more successful. It consists of a nave, two aisles, and chancel, and has a massive square tower at the west end. It probably belongs to the 14th century, notwithstanding that the upper windows of the tower have rather a later character.

The writer last quoted says:—"We find in the Register Book of this parish, that Dr. Edwards, the Bishop of London's chancellor, a great benefactor to this church, gave by will, dated Jan. 9, 1615, 80*l.* towards its repairs, which was laid out in making a gallery, in new setting the lead of the steeple, and cieling the church; he likewise gave 16*l.* long before his death for building a new vestry, school-house, and lodgings for the master, clerk, and sexton, which, with other moneys raised in the parish for that purpose, were applied to the said use, which building was erected at the north door, joining to the church, about the year 1630. There happened no other general repair till the year 1686, when, by the industry of Mr. Robert Limpny, then churchwarden, the church was new roofed, beautified, enlightened, and the inside made more commodious, at about 160*l.* charge to the parish." In 1798 the structure was generally repaired, and its appearance further destroyed by mis-called 'beautifications.'

In 1839 a committee was appointed to inquire into the best means of improving the church accommodation for the inhabitants of Fulham, and directed their attention to two measures having that end in view, namely, the enlargement of the parish church, and the erection of a new chapel. They inclined, however, to the former, and directed Mr. Lapidge to submit plans for effecting it.

These plans being approved of, a contract for the works was entered into February, 1840, and was completed before the 18th of October, in the same year, when the church was opened for service. The alterations affected included an addition to the area of the building at the eastern end of the north aisle; the removal into the tower of a number of monuments and tablets by which the south-eastern extremity of the church was chiefly occupied; a re-arrangement of the galleries, the vestry, the pulpit, and the font. By these means 261 additional sittings were obtained (the number originally was 963), and in consequence of a grant from the Society for Promoting the Enlargement and Building of Churches, 172 of them are free. The total amount expended, after deducting the drawback on the duties on materials used (131*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.*), was 1906*l.* 5*s.*—of which, to the great credit of the parishioners he it said, above 1,600*l.* were raised by subscription.*

If we enter the church we shall find the nave divided from the aisles by clustered columns, terminated anomalously enough, by a horizontal entablature of wood and plaster, from which, on either side, springs an arched plaster ceiling, meeting in a point at the centre. The font, a specimen of the Gothic of 1622, stands in the middle of the church at the east end.

At the east end of the chancel, which is small—only eight feet in depth—there is a four-light window of perpendicular character, filled with painted glass, executed by Mr. Wailes. It presents figures of the four evangelists, one in each light, with four passages in the life of Christ. The traceried head contains the crucifixion, the ascension, and symbols of the four evangelists. An excess of yellow in the glass, which extends to the faces and hands of the figures, is injurious to the general effect. This window was presented to the church by the bishop.

The wall under the window is lined with panelling, carved in oak; and there are two carved canopies, one on either side, over the "commandments."

Against the south wall of the chancel is a large monument to Lady Margaret Legh, who died July 3rd, 1603, represented in Faulkner's book, and over it is a marble tablet in memory of the Right Hon. Lady Sophia Margaret, wife of Sir Charles Eggleton Kent, who died Nov. 16th, 1834, and of Sir Charles, who died on the 5th of the following month. It bears these lines:—

When Heaven recalled the spirit pure and kind,
Whose sweet affection solaced life's decay,
The manly breast, that ne'er till then repined,
In grief's lone dwelling found it hard to stay:
The tie was broken, but the widowed heart,
To mercy's throne was lifted not in vain:
Join Sacred ashes! never more to part,
For death unites the severed nuptial chain.

On the opposite wall is a large monument in memory of "Thomas Smitho," Nov. 27th, 1609, and over it a tablet with medallion head, to William Townsend, Esq., June 30th, 1823.

There are a few mural monuments remaining in the church, including a large one, admirably executed in oak and marble, placed against the east end of the north wall, in memory of Elizabeth Limpny, Oct. 10th, 1694.

The greater number, however, of the old monuments are to be found, as already mentioned, in the lower part of the tower, which, in consequence, takes the aspect of a sepul-

chral chapel. The most important amongst them, is a monument to Lord Viscount Mordaunt, with a statue the size of life,—the work of Bushnell and Bird. It is hardly necessary to remark, that many of the Bishops of London are buried in the churchyard.

The tower, it should be said, was not repaired with the rest of the building in 1840, although in a state of great dilapidation. But in 1845, a committee of the parishioners were appointed by vestry, to examine into the state of the tower and advise as to the repairs necessary, and were afterwards empowered to obtain the assistance of an architect to carry out their recommendations. Mr. G. Godwin was accordingly called in, and, under his direction, the restoration and repairs were made.

The condition of the tower, and the aspect it presented, were most deplorable. The whole face of the stonework was much disintegrated by the action of the weather, and the mortar washed out of the joints, especially where the water from the roof had been thrown against it by the gargoyles, to the depth of several inches. The great west window had disappeared altogether, and the opening was filled up with a wooden framework of barbarous design, partly glazed and partly boarded up. The windows on three sides, in the third story, were covered by huge wooden dials, two of them eight, and one ten feet square; the stone work of all the other windows, strings, &c., was in ruins, the former being kept together by wooden supports: added to which, there was a serious fracture in the tower on the north side, from the top down to the string of the first story. The battlements and upper part of the tower and turret were of brick, coped with paving stone (the work of the *beautifiers* in 1798), and the whole was surmounted by an enormous wooden "extinguisher" (about thirty feet high), with a flag-staff and weathercock at the apex.

The accompanying engraving (p. 54), represents the tower, as now restored, seen from the south-west.

The upper part of the tower was taken down and rebuilt with Kentish rag-stone (the material of which the remainder is composed), the turret raised, the battlements, windows, (including a new west window), the strings, water-tables—in fact, the whole of the squaroid or moulded work replaced with Caen-stone, the flat laid with lead, and the whole face of the tower repaired with rag-stone and pointed with stained mortar, so as to make the old and new work appear alike, and preserve the ancient character of the structure. The louvres and dials are of slate. The entrance doors are of oak, and as it was found desirable to have the means of ventilating the church at this end of it, a pair of iron gates are introduced against the doors, having the hinges elaborated to fill the opening, and prevent the entrance of dogs.

The west window is filled with stained glass and patent quarries, including the arms of the Archbishop of Canterbury, his lordship the present Bishop of London, the Rev. W. Wood, late rector, and the present excellent rector, the Rev. R. G. Baker: this glass was formerly in the east window of the church.

The heads with which the outside label over this window terminates, represent the Queen and the Bishop—the latter is a remarkably good likeness.

The works were executed very satisfactorily by Mr. Samuel Cundy, of Pimlico, and cost in the whole about 1,000*l.*; of which is round

* His lordship, the present bishop, gave 200*l.*; Mr. Palmer, 200*l.*; the Rev. Mr. Baker, 100*l.*; Mr. Darnley, 100*l.*; Mr. Powell, 50*l.*; Mr. R. Wood, 50*l.*, &c.

† Faulkner gives an engraving of a scull which was formerly in the south wall of the chancel.

* Mr. John Gunter, Mr. Henry Fitch, Mr. George Bagley, Mr. W. Chasmore, and Mr. W. Matyear.